

Small Black Box and the Institute of Modern Art presents...

Mini Festival of Improvised Music

Saturday 29 & Sunday 30 November 2003

Institute of Modern Art, 420 Brunswick Street, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane

Saturday Day : 10am - 5pm : EMP - electronic music performance symposium

A forum for musicians, composers, producers and electronic/software instrument builders to discuss methodologies of performance relating to technology and to showcase their approaches or instruments. (in association with QUT creative industries)

Space: IMA - Screening Room, Cost: Free

Saturday Night : 8pm - 12am : Opening Night

The opening showcase in the IMA Gallery brings together masterful improvisers from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane in unique combinations of players for an exploration in spontaneous musics. Let these players challenge your senses with the unearthly sounds conjured from their instruments, or close your eyes and contemplate the music.

Space: IMA - Gallery 3, Cost: \$7*

Sunday Day : 2pm - 5pm : Afternoon Session

From the silly to the sublime - experiments in space and sound. Veteran and debutant noise units invade every hiding-hole in the IMA in a manic battle for noise supremacy. Be warned! Their mind-bending and ear-shocking tactics may lead to artist casualties. Ear plugs on sale.

Space: IMA - Multiple spaces, Cost: \$7*

Sunday Night : 7pm - 10pm : Closing Night

The final session sees an explosion of new media hybrids specially prepared for the festival. Performances melding improvisation with the possibilities of projections; visual art; light; surround sound; and silence.

Prepare yourself for extremes of sensory deprivation and sensory overload.

Space: IMA - Multiple spaces, Cost: \$7*

Featured artists:

Melbourne - Anthony Pateras (Prepared Piano), Natasha Anderson (Amplified Bass Recorder), Joel Stern (Electronics). Sydney - Jim Denley (Flutes/Saxophone), Clare Cooper (Harp), Robbie Avenaim (Percussion). Brisbane - Lawrence English (Laptop/Turtables), Joe Musgrove (Turntable/Electronics), Scott Sinclair (Guitar/Electronics). Plus many special guests.

***Full festival tickets available for \$15. Bookings phone 3252 5750**

Full details available at www.smallblackbox.com.au

[logos - Small Black Box, QUT creative industries, IMA, Arts Qld, OzCo]

Sunday 26 October 2003, IMA Brisbane

SBB # 29

Luke Jaaniste - Clocked Out Duo - Archimedia

Small Black Box is...

A performance and listening space dedicated to experimental music and sound art, held on the last Sunday of each month at the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane, Australia. Running continuously since May 2001, Small Black Box showcases underground and established artists who challenge both audiences and themselves, and serves as a continuing focal point for new music in Queensland.

Visit - www.smallblackbox.com.au!

production team

Scott Sinclair - Curator

Greg Jenkins - Curator

Andrew Kettle - Curator

David Loose - Technical Manager

Luke Jaaniste - Official Writer

The Queensland Government, through Arts Queensland, has provided \$4200 to Small Black Box for experimental musicians and sound artists to present and develop new and innovative works at the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane.

last month - review

Small Black Box pulled off another great combination of experimental electronic music on Sunday 28 September that ranged from the electroacoustic polish of Christine McCombe to the raw technical indeterminacy of Stephen Richards (aka Cleaning lady) and the woodwind virtuosity of Jim Denley. An almost capacity crowd turned out for the concert, in what is almost habitual packed attendance at SBB concerts.

First out of the block was Christine McCombe who presented two pieces of luscious electroacoustic music accompanied by subdued video. The first piece was contemplative and explored sounds and images of the waterfront. Its smooth and graduated progressions from calm moments to intense waves of sample polyphony was in the tradition of acousmatic French works, but mostly reminiscent of British interpretations of the same. McCombe's second piece was an exploration of the sonic variety of harpsichord and significantly treated samples of that instrument. This work started with timbres characteristic of string sounds, but obfuscated by the masking of their attack transients. It ebbed and flowed between luscious and dramatically noisy sections, exploring the range of periodic and noisy sounds of the harpsichord. The control over form and structure made this piece stand out from much of the meandering improvisation often heard in experimental concerts. The only blemish was the sometimes excessive use of untreated harpsichord performance samples that at time disrupted the otherworldly space created by the work.

Next on the menu was Stephen Richards (aka Cleaning lady) visiting from Melbourne, who treated us to a session of analogue noise and sample processing. Visually stimulating, Richard's performance employed a vast array of inexpensive gadgets which he manipulated with significant dexterity. The work was quite minimal on the whole, which varied between tedious and wonderful. His manipulation of electronic signal, a variety of prepared samples and delay and distortion processes had a distinctive style, however, the spatialisation treatment was hampered by unsympathetic jumps between speakers resulting from bus send switching. This performance was well received by the SBB audience, always partial to a noise improvisation.

The final, and much anticipated act was Jim Denley, performing signal processed flutes (alto, soprano and piccolo) and voice. If the audience were expecting sustained flute tones, they were in for a surprise as Denley proceeded with one of the most percussive woodwind performances you are likely to hear. The performance material consisted of key taps, noise bursts and vocal sounds in the main, all processed in real time though several instances of GRM Tools which provided long delays, shimmering phase shifts and the whole soundscape tastefully reverberated and spatialised. The piece provided sufficient variety through changes in instruments and vocal sound types, although the minimal processing was largely unchanged but switched in and out from time to time. The performance was highly polished but its minimalist textural shifts did tend to demand concerted effort from the audience at times.

The whole show was very ably compared by Scott Sinclair, who more than adequately filled the shoes in the absence of regular presenter Greg Jenkins, and the technical aspects of sound reinforcement were appropriately transparent to the audience. The SBB crew and performers are to be congratulated on another varied but rarely dull concert.

Rigel Sirius

After two years and four months, two venues and dozens of performers drawn from academic and underground backgrounds we arrive at this point. The three performers on this evening represented these two basic strands (which cover a lot of sub and micro genres). From the academic side of things comes the first performer of the evening Christine McCombe. Now located in Brisbane Christine has studied composition in Melbourne and Edinburgh and had had compositions performed and released across Europe and Australia. Described as being influenced by electroacoustic composition Christine's two pieces that night were multifaceted which drew differing responses from audience members.

The first one, which bore the name of "Tidal", was accompanied by repetitive images of toy boats bobbing up and down near a dock and a bay with the tide out. The piece itself consisted of low-level ambient swathes with soundbytes of conversation and seabirds. With the field recordings incorporated into the wash along with the images perhaps she was trying to make a comment on time and memory but she didn't quite pull it off as the music and images didn't really quite gel. One audience member made the comment she needed a better editor, while another complained that SBB performances in general tend to have lousy visuals. Valid points both.

The second piece ("Sarabande") had no images to complement it. It went through a number of movements comprising ambient washes, a processed and deconstructed harpsichord, ear shredding noise and an unprocessed harpsichord passage at the end. While Christine's pieces were enjoyable they were pretty much composition by numbers constructed to a rigid formula. One could use the term generic. Still she was better than the god-awful Masteneh Nazarian at last years February SBB (I still shudder at the memory of it).

Next up was Cleaning Lady who is in reality Stephen Richards who has been involved in various group and solo projects like Imperial Leatherman, UPO and Evil Twin among others. This was the second of appearances that weekend (The night before he DJed at the Phonoscape Fabrique). Prior to starting his set he explained that on the night he selects which effects pedals he'll use and improvises on the night. For this performance he used a noise generator and a bank of pedals which would have made a shoegazing band green with envy.

The music? Well it was very full bodied. Using no instruments at all, he generated a palette of sounds which alternated between harsh dissonant squalls and ominous rumblings within the infrasound range. If Peter Jackson should return to his schlock horror roots (let's face it, he does have mainstream respectability nowadays) he could do now worse than to have Cleaning Lady provide the score. All in all a masterful performance.

Last up was Sydney-sider Jim Denley who has been working in international experimental circles since the early eighties and been involved with collaborations galore like The Relative Band with Eugene Chadbourne and Don Burrows(!?) amongst numerous others too lengthy to go into here. Denley that evening presented an exercise in instrument deconstructionism. The instrument which was the focus of this was the bass flute (generally used sparingly in an orchestral setting) in conjunction with a laptop. With the computer providing the grating bed, Denley proceeded to literally rip the bass flute apart and put it back together in ways its creator could never have foreseen.

The sounds he produced could in no way be mistaken for genteel. Denley's blowing on the bass flute brought to mind pterodactyl flying above an active primordial forest. His Frankenstein approach to the bass flute was a spectacle in itself. Throughout his set he gradually stripped it down until there was a just a small tube left with blowing which was on a par with the lung bursting efforts of Peter Brotzmann.

You could see the saliva glistening all over his chin. It was unmissable. For those who did....

Don't fret he's going to be back in November for the "Make It Now" Australian Festival of Improvised Music.

Tonight demonstrated the fact that the avant-garde is open to many different ways of approaching many different instruments. Let's hope SBB continues to foster and showcase all these varied manifestations of the experimental impulse.

Jamie Hume

Luke Jaaniste

Luke Jaaniste is a Brisbane-based artist working in the fields of sound, installation, performance, public art and curation. In 1999 he graduated from studies in composition and musicology at the Qld Conservatorium, and his sound-based activities currently include working with traditional scores, audio software and found objects. His sounds have been featured on Triple J, ABC Classic FM and Radio 4ZzZ, and at many festivals including Brisbane Festival, Melbourne Fringe, Noosa Federation festival, Mini[]Max, NOISE, Straight Out of Brisbane and Can of Worms. Luke is a co-director of national composers group COMPOST and is a PhD candidate at QUT Creative Industries, where he is investigating inter-disciplinary art practices.

Clocked Out Duo

The Australian-American Clocked Out Duo use traditional and prepared piano, percussion, and voice alongside a bewildering array of found objects, sculptures and toys to create carefully designed sonic, visual and theatrical experiences. They have cultivated a range of styles from pulse-driven mindscapes and microsonic soundscapes to mind bending acoustical phenomenology, spastic physical improvisation and intricate vocal-percussion phonetics.

Clocked Out Duo has performed at the Australian Daehakro Festival in Seoul, Sydney Opera House, the Totally Huge New Music Festival in Perth, the Big Sur Experimental Music Festival, the Improvisa festival of improvised music and dance in Barcelona, the LaMama Musica festival in Melbourne, the Melbourne Fringe Festival and in many concert halls, clubs and theatres in Australia, the U.S., Europe and China. In addition they have been artists in residence at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music and Sichuan University in Chengdu, China, the Center for Research in the Computing Arts in San Diego, Stanford University, and the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts in Perth.

Their music can be heard on the CDs "Every Night the Same Dream" and "Water Pushes Sand."

"Perhaps Clocked Out Duo's music is experimental -- but if so, it is an experimentalism steeped in tradition, in an appreciation of the multiplicity of voices that the musics of the world have to offer, and in the fundamental concepts of melody and rhythm. Clocked Out Duo are ready and willing to expand your musical horizons. It's just that they would rather lead you there gently than push you." - Brett McCallon, Splendid E-zine (USA)

"When the audience went out into the bright city, they were already saying: these foreigners really dare to dream." - Chengdu Commercial Daily, March 2002

Website: <http://www.clockedoutproductions.com>

Archimedia

Archimedia explores public space through various media: film, sound, samples, in creating their elaborately considered public audio performances. In 'ambient unities' their first performance at SBB, they combined multiple projections with laptop sampling and Korg synth to create a building, some would say "beautiful" - soundscape to accompany various excerpted cinematic landscapes having to do with media and the city.

This time around for Small Black Box Archimedia presents a new work, "Lost Cities Redux: Homage to Baghdad" using dual-screen projection, soundtrack sampling and other triggered noises, riffs, voices, and sounds intertextually, Archimedia creates a unique audiovisual culture jam "duel" in which the borders of urban spaces are refracted through the multiple lenses of popular cinema samples, juxtaposition, chance, and audio busting. Through cinema's codes, this critical soundwork is performed as a duel of live splicing to "crack" the bellicosity and excesses of contemporary globalized culture.

David Cox is a writer, film maker and digital media artist based in Brisbane. He has made a number of short films including "Puppenhead", "BIT", "Otherzone" and "Tatlin". In addition to short film production, he also dabbles in sound collage, and experimental music. His Masters research at RMIT examines the overlap between urban planning, architecture and online shared communities. He is currently lecturing in Digital Screen Production at Griffith University.

Molly Hankwitz is an american-born writer, artist, curator, and editor. She has written about art and culture for the net and print publications for over ten years. She has performed in poetry and sound collage in a potpourri of small artists-run venues and has created projects in architecture, film, video, and experimental media. She is presently developing new work in self-identity and digital practice for feminist culture, public culture, architecture and language. She teaches and writes in Brisbane and the Gold Coast.